The Historacle

The Official Newsletter of the

Talent Historical Society

Where The Past Meets The Future

206 East Main, Suite C . P.O. Box 582 . Talent, Oregon 97540 . 541/512-8838



SECOND ANNUAL EVENT HONORS TALENT WOMEN "WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE"

On March 19, the Talent Historical Society held its second annual celebration honoring the outstanding women of Talent. The museum exhibit case featured pictures and stories of Cecile Fifield McKee who for 28 years was one of talent's most memorable teachers, and the late Rev. Alice Mae Woolley of the Methodist Church. Both of these women cared deeply for others and made a deep impact on the Talent community. Certificates of appreciation and yellow roses were presented to the outstanding women of 2000: Leola Conner, Audrey Casebeer and Helen Seiber. Also given special mention were Middle School teachers Mary Beth Munroe and Kathy Williams and their students who went to State with their entries in the National History Day contest, Adrianna Williams and Britney Cates. The program included a Chautauqua lecture, a dramatic presentation by Diane Allen on Abigail Scott Duniway, a 19th century Oregon suffragist and feminist who (at her husband's urging) helped persuade men to vote for women's rights. Antoinette Claypoole did a reading from her book Who Would Unbraid Her Hair: the legend of annie mae, the story of a Native American woman who was mysteriously murdered during the Indian Movement of the 1970's. Exhibitors at the event included Calle Allen (who will be offering ceramic workshops for children this summer), Bevinne Chevalier (who does charcoal and pastel drawings of animals. Fleetwood (who creates clay sculptures celebrating women and nature), and Jeanette Marshall (author-lawyer) whose biography, Jaguars, Fish and Microscopes, is not only an interesting book but would be an excellent gift for young people who are considering science as a career.

The exhibit panel on Leola Conner (you'll enjoy Bert Hill's story!), Audrey Casebeer and Helen Seiber can be viewed at the Rogue Valley Bank through the month of April.

JUNE 24 DATE TO HONOR TALENT MEN WHO HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE.

We are asking for nominations for our first annual program. Please write or call the THS at 812-5535 with names and supporting information.

WAGNER CREEK SCHOOL REUNION OLLY OLLY OX IN FREE-OR IS THAT OLLY OLLY OXEN FREE?

No matter! Remember that game and all the similar games played on school grounds fifty to sixty years ago? OK that leaves out most folk alive today. However, Wagner Creek School is going to hold a reunion. That's right. Students who once attended Wagner Creek School are invited to gather at Talent's Community Center on Sunday, May 28, 2000, Memorial Day weekend, from 11:00–5:00, to celebrate their school days, to meet old classmates, and reminisce. There will be a catered luncheon buffet at the Community Center, obviously a program, and groups are invited to join tours to the old school and its grounds, now the private home of Poppie Beveridge, one of Talent Historical Society's members and a volunteer oral history interviewer for the Society.

To facilitate the issuance of invitations, any readers are asked to call Gennell Williams at 488-7968 or Don Brabbin, 535-4855, and provide any names of former students (present addresses from your Christmas card list will do just nicely). The committee planning these festivities really do need those names—half of all school students change names with marriage! Those who come are urged to bring pictures and memorabilia; oral histories will be taken. Olly Olly Ox in free!

FAMILY HISTORY WORKSHOPS ATTRACT OVER SIXTY FOLK

The three Family History Workshops sponsored by the Society drew over sixty participants to the Talent Community Center during the three Saturdays they were held. Janette Merriman, former curator of the Southern Oregon Historical Society, led a workshop dedicated to the preservation of family artifacts, documents, letters, photographs, clothing, etc.

The second workshop was jointly led by Linda Barnes and Marjorie Edens who focused their workshop on ways to record family history, how to interview family members, how to keep a personal journal, and how to write one's own memoirs.

The last of the three workshops centered on genealogical research. Charlene Brown described ways to research for family roots and how to make a family tree.

These were all free workshops provided by the Talent Historical Society. "Given enough interest," Marian Angele, THS Museum Director says, "We will schedule other family history related workshops. However, a phone call indicating interest in attending would be useful. Call her at (541) 512-8838 or email Marian at <talenths@jeffnet.org>. Linda Barnes will host a series of writing workshops this fall through THS.

THS has lovely new note cards for sale. Think of us when you need cards for special occasions.

Ashland's population grew from 300 residents in 1874 to 543 in 1880.
Oregon's population during this same decade expanded by 89 percent.

• ASHLAND

CROSSING THE PLAINS MEANT CROSSING RIVERS



Some rivers between Jackson County, Oregon, and Independence, Missouri, were so deep that wagon wheels would not reach bottom and the oxen or other animals had to swim across. So just how did the Oregon pioneers who wheeled their prairie schooners west cross the deep rivers which could not be forded?

Oxen, when crossing deep rivers, will always turn while horses go straight ahead, so a horseman had to swim the river at the oxen's heads to prevent them from turning downstream with the current. Each ox-team that crossed a river had to be led in this manner. Then, this was the procedure followed according to Virginia Estes Applegate, a pioneer of 1850, who experienced such crossings. She recounted the method to a Works Progress Administrator interviewer in 1938.

"They would get the families and personal effects out of a wagon, take the top or cover off and lift the wagon bed off the wheels, placing it in the water. The families would climb aboard this improvised raft or flat boat and men with poles would guide and push it across the river. The families would be landed and the supplies and freight then be taken over in the same way. Then the wheels, axles, and remaining gear would be transported in like manner. When everything was across the river, the wheels would be restored to the axles, the wagon bed was placed on the running gear, the top was returned to place, provisions and supplies reloaded, families aboard, oxen hitched up, and the journey resumed westward."

And for those who took the Southern Route, the Applegate Trail, into Oregon and went through the notorious Umpqua Canyon where they had to take the wagons apart and lower them down the rock bluffs to the creek bed below, and then seven miles later cross the South Umpqua River, this was the same procedure used.

Now you know how to cross a river with a covered wagon—first get a Conestoga wagon, then...!

SOUTHERN OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY EVENTS

April 14—Friday, 2:00 p.m. Jackson County Courthouse Auditorium, Medford Classic Columns and Simple Chambers: Exploring Oregon's County Courthouses. Presenter: Kathleen Wiederhold. Call 773-6536 to register for this free program.

May 20—Saturday, 2:00 p.m. History Center, 106 N. Central, Medford
The Wonderful Country: How Myths and Stories of the Frontier West Have Shaped
American Culture. Call 773-6536 to register for this free program.

To Be Announced

"The Moving People": The Ulster Mind and the State of Jefferson Presenters: Frederick Feenstjerna and Steve Mark.

arry Oatman in Phoenix continued his "groggery & gambling hole" through 1856. ~Beeson Diary Jacksonville had six saloons in 1854 and 1855. Eighty-five percent of all saloons were located in the mining communities of Jacksonville, Sterling, Applegate and Dardenelles. ~Bond License Book, U. of Oregon Manuscript, Jackson County Archives

PHOENIX HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOW OPEN AND INTERESTING

Talent's twin city, Phoenix, also has a historical society. Like the Talent Historical Society, it is funded by local membership, donations, volunteer contributions of time, and Jackson County fiscal support from the Southern Oregon Historical Society, funds that ultimately come from the county taxpayers.

The Phoenix Historical Society is located near the Phoenix Library, and was formerly the library itself. The Society is housed in a 22 by 22 foot building. Like our Society offices, the building holds both museum exhibits and the Society office. The Phoenix society is now a full-fledged member of the Jackson County History Museums Association, gaining that status by having the office and the museum open for 400 hours and by attracting more than 50 members. In addition, appropriate incorporation and tax-free status had to be acquired.

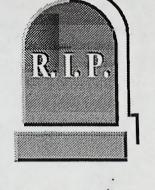
The primary behind-the-scenes instigators are Betty Cox, Dorothy and Cecil Claflin (the latter a former Phoenix postmaster), former mayor Otto Caster, and current president Gary Shaff, a former city planning consultant for Phoenix. Countless unnamed others have also made possible the progress currently evident.

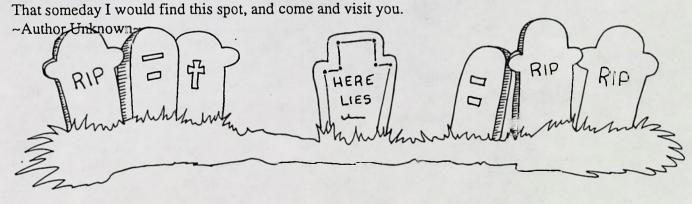
The museum's hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. and Wednesdays from 1:00 to 7:00 p. m. Talent Historical Society urges its members and Talent area residents to visit the new Phoenix Museum and perhaps become members of both societies for history links our two towns inextricably, and the future suggests even closer relationships than in the past (consider our anticipated water main connection as an example, and the close cooperation of emergency services--police and fire protection, and the operation of the Phoenix-Talent School District, Little League, etc.).

THINKING OF THE DUNKARD AND STEARNS CEMETERIES & PERHAPS BLACKBERRIES

Dear Ancestor,

Your tombstone stands among the rest, neglected and alone.
The name and date are chiseled out, on polished, marbled stone.
It reaches out to all who care, it is too late to mourn.
You did not know that I exist, you died and I was born.
Yet each of us are cells of you, in flesh, in blood, in bone.
Our blood contracts and beats a pulse, entirely not our own.
Dear Ancestor, the place you filled, one hundred years ago,
Spreads out among the ones you left, who would have loved you so.
I wonder if you lived and loved, I wonder if you knew





JOHN BEESON, FREE THINKER

In addition to his sympathetic attitudes toward the resident Native Americans who lived in the Rogue River Valley, attitudes that basically drove him out of the valley in 1856, John Beeson continued his freethinking ways apparently

until he died. In the Tidings obituary for Beeson (April 26, 1889), Beeson was described this way:

"Most people agreed, though, that no one was more eccentric than {when} John Beeson stepped out on the lecture platform." He had first incurred public wrath in 1855 when he blamed Indian depredations on the behavior of white settlers. Well-read and mentally active, he had been a restive Methodist, then a universalist, and finally an ardent spiritualist. He associated himself with free thinking groups around Wagner Creek and periodically shouldered the task of reforming local opinion in matters of science, religion, and health, addressing himself to all "who desire to know the truth." Among other topics, Beeson considered "The Authenticity and Divine Inspiration of the Scripture," "The Free School System and Taxation of Church Property," and the "Moral Aspect of National Politics."

In 1882, when seventy-nine years old, he conducted a neighborhood meeting "to consider the advisability of establishing an institution to heal the sick and educate the people in the laws of health." He probably meant a water cure institute, a health spa, rather than a hospital. Beeson's notions were too remote from the prevailing climate of opinion to have had much effect on it.

The Beesons paid one dollar per month for *Harpers* and obtained novels to read from Yreka, novels being considered less than moral at the time. Indeed, John Beeson was considered a free thinker by his neighbors, but he was not alone for Ashland's Oliver Cromwell Applegate, scion of the powerful Applegate

family, was also thought to be a free thinker.

FEMINIST CRUSADER PERSECUTED

Abigail Scott Duniway, the Oregon feminist crusader and lecturer, was pelted with eggs after a lecture in Jacksonville where she "rebuked one of the town's distinguished residents, State Supreme Court Justice Prin, for his treatment of his wife. The citizens of Jacksonville burned her in effigy. She noted that on that trip to Jackson County in 1879 that gold "had become a vacant tradition and a negative influence!" After that totally unappreciative audience in the county seat, she had a totally appreciative one in Phoenix the next day. Clearly there was a cultural conflict which existed between the mining society of Western Jackson County and the more sedate, somewhat more religious and liberal farming society of the Bear Creek Valley. (Farnham)

> In the 1880s, the Bear Creek Valley was called the "Italy of America."

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Talent, Oregon 97540

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Comments and letters may be sent to the Editor, The Historacle, by mail or by e-mail <talenths@jeffnet.org>. Members of the Society receive The Historacle free with membership.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THS ANNUAL REPORT 98-99

For the Annual Meeting of the Society (held early last October), the Secretary of the Society, Katherine Harris, prepared the annual report to the membership. Here are some of the highlights for the last fiscal year for those who could not be there to hear the report:

- ▶ Volunteers donated to the activities of the Society 2,927 hours.
- The Museum was open 895.5 hours. (Now open 4 hours daily, 5 days a week)
- ▶ Connected THS to the Internet <talenths@jeffnet.org>
- ▶ Joined the Oregon Museum Association
- ▶ Board members Lynn Newbry, Bob Casebeer and Myrna Holden elected.
- ▶ Chose Marian Angele, Ph.D., to be current director of the Museum.
- ▶ Created job descriptions for Curator, Registrar, Museum Director, and Office Manager.
- ▶ Awarded THS Annual Volunteer Recognition Award to volunteer Registrar/Curator Rosemary Bevel.
- ▶ Participated in the Talent Harvest Festival with booth and displays.
- ▶ Photographed the restoration progress of the Bell Hose next to Tark's Select Market.
- ▶ Prepared Talent News Flashes for microfilming at the University of Oregon's School of Journalism newspaper archive.

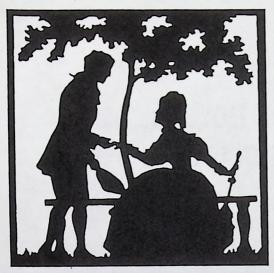
ADMINISTRIVIA? NOPE! REAL ACCOMPLISHMENT!

Just in case members of the Society are wondering exactly what the Staff and Board of the Society have been doing recently, here is a brief list of those things not mentioned other places in this newsletter:

- Submitted the year 2000-2001 budget request to the Southern Oregon Historical Society and appeared before the County Budget Committee to support historical funding of community museums in the county.
- •Renegotiated the agreement with the City of Talent for lease of the current Talent Historical Society office and museum.
- •Held the annual meeting of the Society and elected new directors Lorna DeYoung and John Morrison.
- •Offered to designate available trust funds to the City of Talent for renovation and leak prevention of the former basement library. The City is still studying the proposal at this time.
- •Held a nicely attended Potluck Dinner in November which featured a Chautauqua lecture "Death and Fiesta: Dia de Los Muertos" which was cosponsored by the City of Talent, and the Rogue Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.
- •Assisted the Labow family submit an application for their swamp hickory tree for acceptance as an Oregon Heritage Tree.
- •Developed policies on storage and preservation of the historical collections held by the Society.
- •Altered the banking procedures for the Society funds so that more interest would be secured.
- •Created photo-panel displays to place in local business and public buildings to increase awareness of Talent area history.
- •Created three separate historical exhibits since October for display at the Museum.
- •Conducted a membership drive and can report that Talent Historical Society now has over 100 members and is growing.
- •Recruited and trained approximately 35 volunteers to foster Society activities--oral history interviews, office operations, transcription of historical material, computer editing, photography, etc.

1860S LASSES POINT OUT PROSCRIBED CONDUCT FOR WOULD-BE SUITORS

Jacksonville young ladies outlined in graphic poetic lines the code they demanded of those who would seek their company in the *Sentinel* (Nov. 7, 1867)



The man who takes the red, red wine Can never glue his lips to mine. The man who chews the navy plug Will in our parlor get no hug. Who smokes, or drinks, or cuts a deck Shall never, never bite my neck. Don't you monkey with the cards, Or we will never more be pards. The man who guzzles lager beer Can never, never bite my ear. Drink nothing stronger than red pop, Or in your lap I'll never plop. If aught but water you e'er taste Just keep your forearm off my waist. If you drink wine or other slop You can never hear my corset pop. The man who smokes the cigarette Can never squeeze me, you bet!

ARGUND TALENT AREA

The northwest corner of the junction of Rapp Road and Talent Avenue was the location of the Columbia Orchard during the 1930s and 1940s. Part of the property is still in the possession of the Young family, that corner now being owned by Fred Young.

The Hanscom Building, now occupied by Clayworks, a potter's studio and sales shop operated by Bonnie Morgan, was the site of Boyd's Grocery in the 1930s. It was a traditional country general store according to Davis Young who came to Talent at age seven in 1932 and graduated from Talent High School in 1942. In the 1930s another grocery store—Park's Groceteria—was a major Talent business.

LOOKING FOR GIFTS? WE GOT 'EM FOR YOU!

Remember, if gift-giving is in your future—and it is—Talent Historical Society operates a sales shop. Currently, here are some of the items that may solve that "what-shall-I-get-X" blues.

- An Applegate Trail Sesquicentennial Coin--Only available because the Talent Historical Society created the design and had them minted. You have a choice of bronze, silver, or silver and gold.
- A Talent Historical Society T-shirt with a Wagner Valley logo--multiple colors, choice of sizes. See the address side of the Historacle to see the design.
- A copy of Yvonne Reynolds Talent history. The only Talent history book that has been written that will explain the past that engulfs those of us who live in the Bear Creek and Wagner Creek valleys.
- A reproduction of a map depicting Jackson County landownership circa 1910.
- A Year 2000 Millenial Calendar centering on a color photograph of the Talent Community Center building which just happens to be exactly 100 years old this year.

RECENT GIFT ACQUISITIONS

The Talent Historical Society has several collections: an artifact collection, a library collection, documents collection, a photographic collection and an educational collection. Here are some of the recent donations.

- ✓ Letter, circa 1930, regarding the use of the Wagner Creek School Building for a Sunday School.
- ✓ Doll, a Raggedy Andy doll, donated by Johny Grulle, an Ashland resident. (The creator of these dolls lived in Ashland for a time)
- ✓ Photograph, bridal portrait of Mr. and Mrs. Welborn Beeson
 (Welborn and Kate)
- ✓ Photograph, laser copy, portrait of John Beeson.
- ✓ Computers, Two MAC/IIsi computers, complete with keyboards, monitors and "mice". (These will be used for the Society's educational programs, and were given to the Society by Dennis Reed of Ashland. Compatible and legal programs anyone?)

BLACK ROCK DESERT PROTECTION SOUGHT

Senator Richard Bryan, D-Nevada, is circulating draft legislation aimed at extending Federal protection to 600,000 acres of the Black Rock Desert and High Rock Canyon. This area, which was traversed by the

Applegates and Levi Scott, and hundreds of covered wagons in the 1850s, stretches from about 120 miles north of Reno and northwest toward the Oregon border. Protection is sought because this area contains, to quote the bill," the last nationally significant, untouched segments of the historic California Emigrant Trail" (The Lassen Trail also used this area). Bryan is referring to the wagon ruts, historic inscriptions and "a wilderness landscape largely unchanged since the days of the pioneers."

The ruts are from the wagons which traversed the Applegate, Noble's and Lassen Trails, and are part of the Southern Route to Oregon. The two California trails were used by the goldrushing '49ers. Bryan's bill would also establish more than 100 miles of protected trail corridors. Much of the area is currently being studied by the Bureau of Land Management for possible inclusion as a wilderness area.

SHOULD WE FORGET ABOUT HISTORY?

The historical societies in the Rogue Valley are threatened again with a major reduction in their County funds. Their budgets have been frozen for two years although property values have increased. The County recently informed the Jackson County History Museums Association that not only will they not get their budget request this year, they can expect that last year's budget figure will be reduced an additional 27%. At a time when Oregon is mounting its Joint Interim Task Force on Cultural Development to preserve Oregon's cultural heritage we are faced with a major budget cut that will force many museums to close, curtail programs, or focus on preserving the artifacts and histories that we have. As non-profit organizations we rely primarily on volunteers, donations and gifts and have no reserves to fall back on. Our requests are modest and efficiently used.

Those who understand the value of history and the significance of preserving and understanding the past are encouraged to write letters to your local newspapers, to inform voters about the significance of historical societies. Please attend the rally at the Courthouse the day of the budget hearing in April to support our cause. If every County organization took a 1% cut in its budgets we could jointly absorb what the historical societies are being asked to shoulder along. For further details and information, please call SOHS at 773-6536 or THS at 512-5535.

DOWNSTREAM CALENDAR

March through May 15, 2000

Talent Historical Society Museum,
Talent Community Center.
Museum Open hours.

Exhibit "Women and History"

March 2000 All month

Valley of the Rogue Bank, Talent.

Photo Exhibit, Walking Tour Brochure
Highlights. Pictures and descriptions of
Talent homes.

March 19, 2000 Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 Talent Historical Society Museum,

Talent Community Center.

Program, "In Honor of Talent Women"
Chautauqua lecture on Abigail Scott
Dunniway, early Oregon suffragette, portrayed
by Diane Allen. Reading from her book Who
Would Unbraid Her Hair, Antoinette
Claypoole. Refreshments available.

April 9, 2000 Sunday, 1:30 p. m.

Talent Library.

Board Meeting of Talent Historical Society directors. Public Welcome.

April 13, 2000 Thursday 10:00 a.m. .. Talent Historical Society Museum, Talent Library.

Jackson County Historical Museum Association meeting, hosted by Talent Historical Society.

May 6, 2000 Saturday 6:30 p. m. Talent Historical Society Museum,

Talent Community Center.

International Potluck Supper. Bring a dish and table service. Program and mingling.

May 21, 2000 Sunday 1:30 p.m.

Talent Library.

Board meeting of the **Talent Historical Society** directors. Members and general public invited to attend.

June 11, 2000 Sunday 1:30 p. m.

Talent Library.

Board meeting of the Talent Historical Society directors. Meeting open to all.

June 24, 2000 1:00 on.
Talent Historical Society Museum,
Talent Community Center.
Program, "History of Talent Men,"
Refreshments available.

PUBLIC POTLUCK DINNERS HAVE BEGUN

On February 26, the Talent Historical Society, Rogue Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the City of Talent sponsored Talent's first seasonal International Potluck Dinner at the Community Center. The food was delicious! Besides the feast and the opportunity to visit with friends and neighbors, Kate Winthrop of the BLM gave a very interesting and informative slide presentation and lecture on "The Archaeology of the Upper Rogue." Although the archaeology in this area has primarily taken place in the 1960s, 1980s and 1990s, recent developments in technology bring much more information to light today. It is possible to detect when and how many times an obsidian tool has been reworked or which

animals were killed by each point (deer, elk, porcupine, beaver, antelope, salmon, turtle, rabbit and big horn sheep were frequent food sources here). A replica of the plank houses found in permanent settlements is being built near Kirby, Oregon. And did you know that the bow and arrow came into use only 1500 years ago? If you missed the presentation and exhibit, you might be able to catch it at Eagle Point in April.

These International potluck dinners will take place each season. The next one is scheduled for May 27 at 6:30. Come, invite your "international" friends, and bring an "international" dish to share. Program suggestions are welcome.



YUP! IT IS HISTORACLE!

Attentive readers, and that condition is our fervent desire, will notice that the **Talent Historical Society** had a new look as of the preceding issue. *Historacle* as a name is really something other than a sort of cute pun. Consider the root words *history* and *oracle*. And then consider how their meanings may merge meaningfully. *History*, according to the 1889 *Century Dictionary* (It's okay,

a history society likes old books!), has several definitions for the word. First, history is "a narrative, oral or written, of past events" (Well, so newspaper accounts are history!). Secondly, history "is that branch of science which is occupied with ascertaining and recording the facts about the past" (Hmmm, that is a bit more than what yesterday's newspaper does!). Thirdly, history is "the aggregate of events, recorded or unrecorded, which mark a given period of past time." (Well, that provides a bit more focus and the Society's oral interviewers try to move the unrecorded into the arena of recorded history!). Finally, history "in a general sense includes chronicles, annals, biography, autobiography, and travel" accounts. In other words, to practice history, one must record, narrate and depict past events and the people involved.

So now, how about *oracle*? An *oracle* is an utterance that answers a human inquiry, often involving a future event. For centuries such oracles and the uncommonly wise persons whose opinions were prized had "a strong influence on the course of human affairs;" such persons were "powerful in the promotion of good government and justice. In their most significant ways oracles (both the utterance and the utterer) were looked upon as an infallible guide or standard of reference."

So the combination which we are using for the name to the Talent Historical Society newsletter, Historacle, is both a statement and a challenge for the Society. We try to preserve local history, protect historical artifacts, collect historical documents, promote local history awareness, and in all ways possible enhance the appreciation of Talent's past and promote greater historical interest in the people around us and the places which surround us.

TALENT HISTORICAL SOCIETY P.O. BOX 582

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